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Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution submitted by the President of the General Assembly

Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its determination to strengthen further the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations and thus improve its performance in order to realize the full potential of the Organization, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to respond more effectively to the needs of Member States and existing and new global challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century,

Recalling all the previous reform efforts, including those based on the report of the Secretary-General,[1] and its resolutions 52/12 A of 12 November 1997 and 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform",

Recalling also Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the Organization,

Recalling further the respective mandates of various treaty bodies,

Having in mind the necessity to pursue the process of revitalization of the General Assembly, reform of the Security Council, restructuring of the Economic and Social Council and modernization of the Secretariat,

Recalling the determination of Member States to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing all the priorities set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[2]

Bearing in mind that notable political, economic and social developments, particularly in Africa, call for continued strong and focused cooperation between the United Nations system and the Member States,

[1] A/51/950 and Add.1-7.
[2] See resolution 55/2.

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Having considered the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change",[3] the statement of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly of 30 October 2002[4] and the conference room papers prepared by the Secretariat,[5] as well as the views expressed by Member States,

1. *Welcomes* the efforts and initiatives of the Secretary-General aimed at further reforming the United Nations to cope with contemporary challenges and address new priorities facing the Organization in the twenty-first century;

2. *Stresses* that the strengthening of the United Nations encompasses the revitalization, reform and restructuring of the principal organs of the United Nations;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General, while implementing the provisions of the present resolution, to continue to take into account the views and comments expressed by Member States and to respect fully the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly;

4. *Emphasizes* the need to further strengthen the efforts of the United Nations in implementing the development goals through enhanced mechanisms, adequate resources and effective follow-up activities;

5. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to submit a shorter proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 that fully justifies the resource requirements and better reflects the priorities of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, the United Nations Millennium Declaration[2] and the outcomes of the major international conferences, taking into account the full scope of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation,[6] while emphasizing that reform should not be seen as a budget-cutting exercise;

6. *Takes note* of the proposal of the Secretary-General to develop and present plans for strengthening inter-agency coordination in respect of human rights technical assistance, which are carried out at the country level, at the request of interested countries;

7. *Stresses* the importance of the country-driven approach in the operational activities of the United Nations funds and programmes, bearing in mind their existing mandates;

8. *Encourages* States parties to the human rights treaties and the respective treaty bodies to review the reporting procedures of treaty bodies with a view to developing a more coordinated approach and to streamlining the reporting requirements under these treaties, and requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to support this exercise, including through submission of recommendations, as appropriate;

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[3] A/57/387 and Corr.1

[4] A/57/PV.38.

[5] A/57/CRP.1 and Corr.1, A/57/CRP.2 and A/57/CRP.3.

[6] ST/SGB/2000/8.

9. *Requests* the Commission on Human Rights and the relevant intergovernmental bodies to review the human rights special procedures in order to rationalize their work and enhance their effectiveness, consistent with their mandates, and also requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to support this exercise, including through submission of recommendations, as appropriate, and by providing adequate administrative support to each of these special procedures;

10. *Encourages* the efforts of the Secretary-General to improve the effectiveness and management of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions and taking into account, as appropriate, the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Secretariat;[7]

11. *Welcomes* the proposals of the Secretary-General to improve the effective and targeted delivery of public information activities, including the restructuring of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly;

12. *Reaffirms* the role of the Committee on Information in guiding the process of restructuring the Department of Public Information, and therefore invites the Committee on Information to engage actively in the process;

13. *Welcomes* the continuing efforts to enhance the use of information technology within the Department of Public Information, bearing in mind the constraints experienced by developing countries in terms of access to information;

14. *Takes note* of the proposals of the Secretary-General contained in action 9 of his report,[3] which are intended to improve the management of the libraries, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report for further consideration by the relevant United Nations bodies, including the Committee on Information at its twenty-fifth session, with a view to taking a decision on the Secretary-General's proposals in this regard at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly;

15. *Also takes note* of the proposal of the Secretary-General contained in action 8 of his report,[3] to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, where appropriate, in consultation with concerned Member States, starting with the creation of a Western European hub, followed by a similar approach in other high-cost developed countries, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of the proposal with the objective of applying this initiative in other regions, in consultation with Member States, where this initiative will strengthen the flow and exchange of information in developing countries;

16. *Notes* the proposal of the Secretary-General to transfer the functions and resources of the Cartographic Section from the Department of Public Information to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, while maintaining the service currently provided to users outside the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and decides to consider the proposal in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005;

[7] A/57/488.

17. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to conduct a systematic evaluation of the impact, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of all activities of the Department of Public Information, and requests the Secretary-General, with assistance from the Office of Internal Oversight Services, to proceed as quickly as possible in this regard and to report on progress made to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session through the Committee on Information at its twenty-fifth session;

18. *Notes* the proposal to improve the electronic access to United Nations collections, publications and parliamentary documents, and requests the Secretary-General to keep the internal capacity for the provision of hard copies at the request of Member States, subject to the relevant provisions of its resolution 56/242 of 24 December 2001;

19. *Welcomes* the proposals of the Secretary-General to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the conference-servicing function of the United Nations, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to consult Member States, including relevant groups, on how best to accomplish this goal with due attention to their needs, and in this regard emphasizes the need for Member States to take well-informed decisions, and decides that the measures pertinent to it will be decided upon in the context of its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on improving the performance of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services;[8]

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to start, on a trial basis, a consultative process with the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the Assembly at the end of the main part of each session of the Assembly, with a view to consolidating reports on related subjects, if decided by the Main Committees;

21. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit proposals on recurring reporting requirements to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session for consideration and decision;

22. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to develop an implementation plan to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations presence for developmental and humanitarian activities in developing countries by September 2003, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report for consideration of the General Assembly through the relevant intergovernmental bodies;

23. *Also welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to issue a document clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various United Nations entities in the area of technical cooperation by September 2003 and to submit a report thereon to the relevant intergovernmental bodies for their consideration;

24. *Further welcomes* the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the management capacities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, inter alia, by establishing a policy planning unit, and notes in this regard his intention to submit, in the context of the budget for the biennium 2004-2005, proposals for a new position of Assistant Secretary-General for its consideration;

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[8] A/57/289.

25. *Endorses* the decision of the Secretary-General to entrust the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, who will report directly to him, with the responsibilities of:

(*a*) Coordinating and guiding the preparation of Africa-related reports and inputs, in particular support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development, by the United Nations system and the international community, and the coordination of global advocacy in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

(*b*) Coordinating the interdepartmental task force on African affairs to ensure coherence and an integrated approach for United Nations support to Africa, including following up the implementation of all summit and conference outcomes related to Africa and addressing gaps and initiating reports on critical issues affecting Africa;

26. *Approves* the transfer of resources allocated to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries and those from the current Office of the Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, to the new Office of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the new Office is reflected in the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 with the allocation of adequate resources for its expanded mandate;

27. *Concurs* with the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a panel of eminent persons, reflecting a diversity of views, to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society, stresses that the terms of reference of such a panel should underscore the intergovernmental character of the United Nations, and decides to consider the recommendations of the panel through the respective intergovernmental process;

28. *Decides* that the creation of a partnership office as part of the effort to enhance cooperation in the work of the Organization with the private sector, taking into account the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits, should be subject to its resolutions 55/215 of 21 December 2000 and 56/76 of 11 December 2001;

29. *Recognizes* the need to continue to improve and streamline the planning, programming and budgetary cycle of the Organization;

30. *Notes* the reference to sunset provisions in the report of the Secretary-General[9] and recalls that no decision has been taken in this regard;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to implement regulation 5.6 and rule 105.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation;

32. *Takes note* of the proposal of the Secretary-General, contained in action 21 of his report,[3] for a shorter, more strategic medium-term plan that is linked to the budget outline, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a more detailed proposal to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for consideration at its fifty-eighth session;

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[9] A/57/387, para. 44.

33. *Reaffirms* the roles of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in the intergovernmental consideration of the planning, programming and budgeting process;

34. *Invites* the Committee for Programme and Coordination to continue to improve its working methods;

35. *Takes note* of the request of the Secretary-General for a degree of flexibility to reallocate resources between programmes and between allocations for personnel and other allocations within a single budget period and in exceptional circumstances, notes the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to develop criteria for the use of any such authorization, proposed modalities for reporting the duration and programmatic impacts of reallocations, including specification of the exceptional circumstances in which it would be used, and to report thereon to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for its consideration at its fifty-eighth session;

36. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the system of evaluation and monitoring that underlines the importance of assessing programme impacts;

37. *Notes* the proposal of the Secretary-General for a single-stage intergovernmental review of the programme budget and medium-term plan, contained in action 22 of his report,[3] and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report clarifying his proposal for consideration by the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-seventh session;

38. *Shares* the vision of the Secretary-General to foster excellence among United Nations staff, inter alia, by rejuvenation, while ensuring the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, as well as equitable geographical representation and gender balance;

39. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit, as soon as possible, but not later than at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, for consideration in the context of human resources management, a study on ways to promote General Service staff to Professional posts, analysing the effects on non-represented and underrepresented countries, while ensuring the implementation of equitable geographic representation and aligning the procedures and qualifications of the General Service to the Professional category examinations to those of the national competitive recruitment examinations;

40. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General, as set out in action 32 of his report,[3] to continue to improve management, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to improve accountability and responsibility as well as monitoring and control mechanisms and procedures;

41. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of the reform measures as considered in the present resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.